

September 2005

Temperature: Unseasonably warm temperatures were felt across the region with monthly temperature departures of +4.5°F at DCA, +4.6°F at BWI, and +4.7°F at IAD. The heat spell resulted in the 5th warmest September on record at DCA and BWI, and the 2nd warmest at IAD. DCA recorded 27 days with at or above normal highs, including 7 days with readings at or above 90°F, the most such September days since 1998. The dryness provided a favorable environment for maximum sunlight and resulted in summer-like readings for the majority of the month. DCA recorded 26 days with highs at or above 80°F, including the first 23 days. A strong frontal passage on the 29th briefly ended the persistent warm readings and produced subnormal highs on the last day of the month. The 30th was also marked by lows in the 40's at many locations, including a minimum of 40°F at IAD. A few locations well north and west of the metropolitan areas recorded lows in the 30's. Otherwise, minimum temperatures were quite mild with readings in the 50's and 60's throughout most of the month.

Precipitation: An unprecedented stretch of dry weather accompanied by well above normal temperatures highlighted conditions across the Washington/Baltimore area. September 2005 was the driest on record in Washington and IAD, and 6th driest at BWI. DCA's monthly precipitation total of 0.11" was 0.03" less than the previous record set in 1884 and yielded a monthly deficit of -3.68". At IAD, the monthly precipitation total of 0.15" easily shattered the previous record of 0.62" in 1967 and produced a monthly precipitation departure of -3.67". BWI's total of 0.67" was its lowest September precipitation total since 1986 (-3.31" monthly departure). January-August precipitation totals of close to 30" at both DCA and IAD and 34" at BWI were between 3" and 5" above normal through the first 8 months of the year but these surpluses evaporated at both DCA and IAD and decreased to less than 2" at BWI by the end of September.

Many locations did not record measurable rain for 28 days (from August 29–September 25), the longest such period since October 17 - November 19, 2001. Showers amounting to about a tenth of an inch on the 26th provided many areas with their only measurable rainfall of the month. It was the driest month at both DCA and IAD since October 2000. A few locations did receive slightly higher monthly precipitation totals than DCA and IAD. Scattered showers on the 14th- 15th brought over a half an inch of rain to portions of upper Montgomery County, MD, and at BWI (.55"). Isolated severe thunderstorms were observed on the 16th in Frederick, VA, with some wind damage, on the 17th in St. Mary's County, MD, (0.75" hail) and on the 23rd in Fauquier County and Rappahannock Counties, VA, with high wind contributing to downed trees and power lines. The extreme dryness prompted the U.S. Department of Agriculture to declare several Virginia counties, including Loudoun, Fauquier and Clarke, as agricultural disaster areas, according to press reports.

SEPTEMBER 2005 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

Location	Station Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In.)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmIT	DepNml	Max	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Yr to Date
National (DCA)	84.7	65.3	75.0	70.6	+4.5	93/23	50/30	0.11	3.79	-3.68	29.71
Baltimore (BWI)	83.5	60.5	72.0	67.4	+4.6	93/23	41/30	0.67	3.98	-3.31	30.44
Dulles (IAD)	84.5	59.4	72.0	67.4	+4.7	93/23	40/30	0.15	3.82	-3.67	33.36
Andrews (ADW)											N/A

Looking Ahead to October: The first freeze!

October traditionally marks the first freeze in suburban locations. When will the the Washington/Baltimore area record its first frost or freeze in 2005? Below is a list of the first 32°F or lower readings at DCA and IAD in the last 10 years.

Year	First 32°F (or lower) reading		Year	First 32°F (or lower) reading	
	DCA	IAD		DCA	IAD
2004	December 4	October 18	1999	November 18	October 28
2003	November 10	October 3	1998	November 5	October 2
2002	November 27	October 18	1997	November 16	October 2
2001	December 22*	October 9	1996	November 12	October 12
2000	November 16	October 8	1995	November 5	October 17

*Latest date for first frost ever recorded.